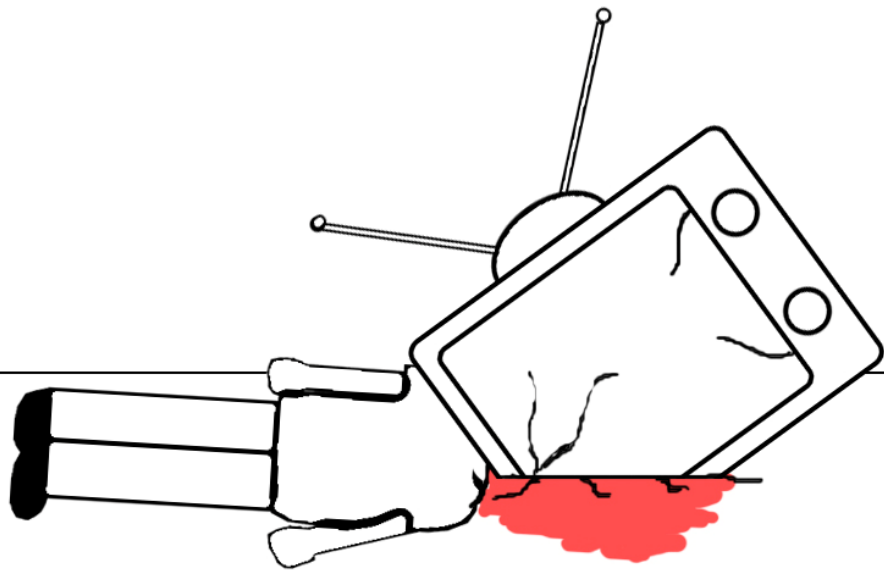


THROW OUT YOUR TV

An Analysis of Corporate Media & The Alternatives



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By Aaron Fitzpatrick

Throw Out Your TV

An Analysis of Corporate Mainstream Media & the Alternatives

We have been consuming mass media in bulk for the better part of sixty years now. In Canada, we look to television, print media and radio to provide us with the majority of our entertainment and information. But do we really gain anything of lasting value from the images and messages being projected from our televisions, radios and print?

In particular, the activity of watching television involves not much more than sitting isolated in our own homes watching a flickering screen and trying to be entertained by the content appearing on that screen. We are given a limited selection of programming to choose from and regardless of whether or not there is anything scheduled that is worth watching, it's almost automatic that we sit and watch hours upon hours of this limited programming, ignoring all outside signs of life. Television keeps us indoors and uninvolved in the running and operation of our communities and our society. The range of content on television is minimal; of course TV's failure to include educational programming is mostly the result of the majority of television viewers preferring thoughtless, mindless nonsense over programming with stimulating subject matter. The majority of television programming caters to a population that prefers celebrity gossip and exaggerated reality over truthful, reality-based programs that may cause the viewer to think about the issues facing the world. Most viewers do not want to feel guilty about their inactivity in world issues, so they stay away from programming that might leave them feeling helpless about what is happening in the world. If they don't know about it, then it doesn't affect them. It's the out of sight, out of mind, train of thought.

It seems as though television is designed to prevent the viewer from forming their own thoughts or performing actions outside of their workplace or their home. For example, it is common some Canadians to spend eight hours or more in the workplace, followed

by another five to seven hours in front of the television. The result is a population comprised of individuals plagued with obesity who know nothing more than what they are told through mainstream, corporate media.

But is there really a problem with all of this? We are entertained by the content fed to us through television, radio and in popular movies, and we keep up to date on world issues through the newspapers and television news. Furthermore, we aren't causing anyone any harm by partaking in the consumption of the various forms of media, and as long as we keep to ourselves and mind our own business, who's to say that what we are doing is wrong? Well, first and foremost, the world has been run by the same politicians, bankers and corporate CEOs for the last two thousand years. These men run the planet as their own piggy bank of resources, while callously endangering the lives of all of Earth's inhabitants in the process. We are all affected as a result of the ruling class' economy-first attitude towards the planet in the form of pollution, oil spills, clear cutting, wars and death, yet we claim to feel helpless as an excuse not to do anything about it.

Why do we feel so helpless against the evil humans (predominantly male) who are responsible for the degradation of planet Earth? Through television news and through the media, we are kept informed of some of the most horrible things that are happening in the world. Most of us only know the world's issues from what we are told through popular media. The stories covered in popular media are mostly brief snippets of the larger picture. We are fed these brief snippets of events like natural disasters, war and social dissent, but the brief summaries are only a small portion of the big picture; excluded from these reports are the aftermath of the events such as the human suffering, destruction of wild life and who or what is responsible. We are fed these summaries one after another in the form of quick "news" stories over the course of a period, and the result is our feeling a range of potential emotions

including anger, sympathy and sadness among a variety of others. We are overwhelmed by the combination of the speed at which we are given the information, and the intense ranging nature of the content (death, death, war, dying, many dead, pollution...). We feel helpless because news broadcasts cover so many terrible issues in a short period of time, we are left feeling so overwhelmed that we ultimately throw our hands up in the air, not knowing where to begin with all of the intense subject matter that has just assaulted our minds. Corporate news media focuses mostly on global stories, and when they do touch on local stories, they are usually stories about murder, rape or car accidents – matters that we can't do much about except to talk about these stories with friends or coworkers; "did you hear about that earthquake, crash, murder, rape?" "Yeah, that was terrible." And if we do feel like participating in the prevention of the events covered in broadcast news, we are rarely given the resources needed to get involved, or ways to go about creating solutions to these problems.

So what do we get from investing so much time in popular media? We rarely get anything that we can apply to the betterment of our daily lives. Most of us feel as though it is automatic that we must be entertained in our spare time. But in reality, while we are being "entertained," evil men are polluting the only home that we have on planet Earth, and they are killing most of our planet's inhabitants, including their own species, all in the name of PROFIT.

But what if we were to stop being distracted by all the junky entertainment; all of this terrible *junk food for the mind*? Most of us don't know HOW to participate in community decision making or local social issues and politics. The only thing we were ever taught in our educational institutions or by the media was how to get a job, pay taxes and be in debt. Oh, and maybe to hope to one day hit it big in the lottery and become a millionaire. So from the beginning we are deprived of the tools necessary to cause or to want to cause

significant change in society. Things have been the same way for so long, most of us feel that society will never change, and why should it?

Our ability to enjoy this precious gift called "life" has been seriously hampered by those in power since the beginning of so-called "civilized society." In modern times, the never-ceasing gloom and doom brought upon by a WORLD GONE CRAZY has been the cause of more than one anxiety attack in the human population. These anxieties and doom and gloom are the result of a fairly small group of war-mongers and profiteers running the planet. If we are to truly enjoy the gift of life, and if we want future generations to enjoy the gift of life, we have to stand as an entire society united against all of the pollution, war and death that are a by-product of the economically minded human rulers of planet Earth.

How do we achieve uniting entire communities against the degradation of our lives and the planet that we share with trillions of other living microbes? I believe an intelligent first step would be for all of us to separate ourselves from corporate mainstream media all together. We should stop allowing ourselves to be distracted by the junk-tube, and actually take an interest in what is happening in our own backyards. Once we have freed ourselves from the doom and gloom perpetuated by corporate mass media, it seems like we won't have much to do except participate in the wide range of events that are happening in our own communities. With all of the time and money we'll be saving on not owning and paying for television and other junk media, we'll have ample time to explore the culture, art and society that are being nourished all around us. Some local events are even free of charge, or might ask for a donation so that they can continue to function. And don't forget about that fading pastime activity that was one of the first skills we were taught as humans, the solitary internalization of

information known as READING. The library is a wonderful place to explore for an endless supply of free entertainment and information. There is also a variety of local social and community-minded groups that meet frequently to discuss local issues, as well as a variety of alternative media resources that act as our guide to important community-minded groups and events.

As individuals sitting in our homes with our faces stuck in the TV, we are useless to any positive movement towards the betterment of Earth. It is important not to be overwhelmed by all of the horrible things happening globally, but it is equally important to be aware of the plight of planet Earth as a united, cooperative, integrated habitat. There are plenty of issues in our own communities that could use our attention. Having a positive affect in your own community is the best place to start, keeping in mind that we are all on the same planet, and we are all affected by the same issues. If we stop being concerned so much about our own individual needs and start thinking more as a society and as a group of like-minded humans with the same basic necessities and emotions, maybe we can make the world a better place for all of Earth's inhabitants.

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Please e-mail any responses (i.e. criticisms, agreements, notable 'zines, suggested readings...) to the above e-mail address.

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA RESOURCES

www.mediacoop.ca (Alternative media co-op operating in Toronto, Halifax, Montreal & Vancouver)

www.linchpin.ca (Anarchist news run by the Common Cause anarchist group of Southern Ontario)

www.hmag.ca (Hamilton-based newspaper)

www.infowars.com (Fanatical American conspiracy based website)

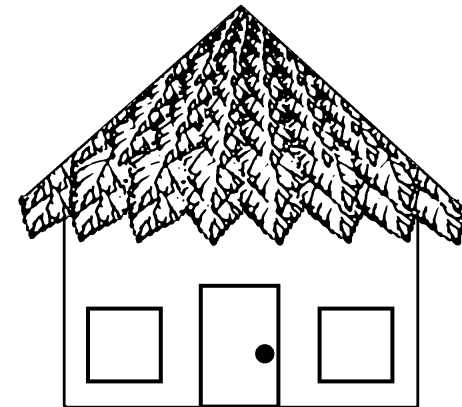
www.chycho.com (Vancouver-based social media website)

www.myspace.com/freeleereed

www.skydragon.org

www.staircase.org

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